CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 2 FEBRUARY 1996 ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE SENATE RATIFICATION OF THE START II NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTION TREATY WITH RUSSIA, AND A WHITE HOUSE RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY CONTAINING BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON START II RATIFICATION

As I mentioned during my plenary statement of February 1, attached are copies of a Statement by the President on the Senate Ratification of the START II Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia, and a White House release from the Office of the Press Secretary containing Background Information on START II Ratification.

I would be grateful if you would issue these documents as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament and distribute them to all member states and non-member participants in the work of the CD.

(Signed): Stephen J. Ledogar
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release January 26, 1996

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE SENATE RATIFICATION OF THE START II NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTION TREATY WITH RUSSIA

Today, Senate Democrats and Republicans, working together, have increased the security of the American people by ratifying the START II Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia. I applaud this historic step. As I stated in my State of the Union address this week, it will make every American, every Russian and people all over the world more secure.

START II requires dramatic cuts in the nuclear arsenals of our two countries. Together with the START I Treaty, which we put into force in December 1994, it will eliminate submarine, bomber and land based missile launchers that carried more than 14,000 warheads -- two-thirds of the nuclear arsenal the United States and the former Soviet Union maintained at the height of the Cold War. START II will also eliminate the most destabilizing type of nuclear weapon -- the multiple warhead ICBM. Starting with President Nixon, six American presidents from both parties have worked to control and reduce the number of nuclear weapons. President Bush negotiated START II and submitted it to the Senate in January, 1993. I am proud that we have seized the opportunity presented by the end of the Cold War to take this big step back from the nuclear precipice.

As president, my most basic duty is to protect the security of the American people. That's why I have made reducing the nuclear threat one of my highest priorities.

As a result, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no Russian missiles pointed at our people. We convinced Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to give up the nuclear weapons left on their land when the Soviet Union broke up. We persuaded North Korea to freeze its dangerous nuclear weapons program under international monitoring. We're working with countries around the world to safeguard and destroy nuclear weapons and materials -- so that they don't fall into the hands of terrorists or criminals. We led global efforts to win the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty which bans the spread of nuclear weapons to states that do not have them.

Now, as I urged in the State of the Union, we must do even more to give the American people real, lasting security. We can end the race to create new nuclear weapons by signing a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty this year. We can outlaw forever poison gas if the Senate ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention this year. We can take the fight to terrorists who would acquire terrible weapons of mass destruction if Congress finally passes legislation I proposed after Oklahoma City to give American law enforcement an even stronger arsenal.

Working together, I believe we can and we will take all these important steps to increase the security of the American people.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release January 26, 1996

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

START II RATIFICATION

THE PURPOSE OF START II

The principal U.S. objective in strategic arms control is to increase stability at significantly lower levels of nuclear weapons. START II is an equitable and effectively verifiable agreement that reduces the number of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles and the warheads on them. Overall strategic nuclear forces will be reduced by an additional 5,000 warheads beyond the 9,000 Warheads being reduced under START I.

THE START II PARTIES

The START II Treaty was negotiated by the United States and Russia between 1991 and 1992 and submitted to the Senate by President George Bush following signature on January 1993.

START II's CENTRAL FEATURES

The START II Treaty builds upon the START I Treaty signed on July 31, 1991, between the United States and the Soviet Union. All START I provisions will pertain, except as explicitly modified in the new Treaty. It will remain in force throughout the duration of START I (START I has a 15-year duration and can be extended for successive 5-year periods by agreement among the Parties).

The Treaty will set equal ceilings on the number of strategic nuclear weapons that can be deployed by either side. Ceilings will be set for two phases: Phase One to be completed seven years after entry into force of the START I Treaty (START I entered into force on December 5, 1994) and Phase Two to be completed by the year 2003. Phase Two may be completed by the end of the year 2000 if the United States can help finance the elimination of strategic offensive arms in Russia.

-- Phase One: By the end of the first phase, each side must have reduced its total deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 3,800-4,250. Those include the number of warheads on deployed ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) as well as the number of warheads for which heavy bombers with nuclear missions are equipped. Of the total of 3,800-4,250 warheads, no more than 1,200 may be on deployed MIRVed ICBMS, no more than 2,160 may be on deployed SLBMs, and no more than 650 may be on deployed heavy ICBMS.

-- Phase Two: By the end of the second and final phase, each side must have reduced its total deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 3,000-3,500. Of those, none may be on MIRVed ICBMs, including heavy ICBMs. Thus, all MIRVed ICBMs must be eliminated from each side's deployed forces; only ICBMs carrying a single-warhead will be allowed. No more than 1,700-1,750 deployed warheads may be on SLBMs. There will be no prohibition on MIRVed SLBMs.

DOWNLOADING

The Treaty will allow for a reduction in the number of warheads on certain ballistic missiles. Such "downloading" will be permitted in a carefully structured fashion, modifying the rules agreed in START I.

-- Each side will be able to download two existing types of ballistic missiles by up to four warheads each, in addition to the U.S. Minuteman III and the Russian SS-N-18. There will be no aggregate limits on the number of warheads that can be downloaded.

-- A limit of 105 ICBMs of one of those types may be downloaded by up to five warheads each. Such an ICBM may only be deployed in silos in which it was deployed at the time of START signature.

Thus, the three-warhead U.S. Minuteman III ICBM, the four-warhead Russian SS- 17 ICBM and 105 of the six-warhead Russian SS-19 ICBMs will be able to be downloaded to a single warhead, to comply with the requirement to eliminate all MIRVed ICBMS. The U.S. Peacekeeper ICBMs and the Russian SS-18 heavy ICBMs and SS-24 ICBMs must all be eliminated, in accordance with START procedures.

MISSILE SYSTEM ELIMINATION

In START I, deployed SLBMs and most deployed ICBMs may be removed from accountability either by destroying the launchers (silos for fixed ICBMS, mobile launchers for mobile ICBMs, and launcher sections of submarines for SLBMs), or by converting those launchers so that they can only carry another type of permitted missile. The one exception is the SS-18; under START I, the requirement to eliminate 154 deployed SS-18s must be met through silo destruction, not conversion.

Under START II, those rules generally will continue to apply. The major exception will again be the SS-18. Ninety SS-18 silos may be converted to carry a single-warhead missile, which Russia has said will be an SS-25-type. The Treaty will lay out specific procedures, including on-site inspections, to ensure that those converted silos will never again be able to launch a heavy ICBM. The remaining 64 SS-18 silos subject to this Treaty will have to be destroyed.

In exchange for the right to retain up to 90 converted SS-18 silos, the Treaty will require that all SS-18 missiles and canisters, both deployed and non-deployed, be eliminated no later than January 1, 2003. This is a major change from the START I Treaty. Generally, START I did not seek destruction of missiles. But in START II, the Russians have agreed to eliminate all SS-18 missiles, both deployed and non-deployed. This fully achieves a long-standing U.S. goal, the complete elimination of heavy ICBMS.

HEAVY BOMBERS

In START 1, nuclear heavy bombers are subject to more flexible counting rules than are ballistic missiles. Each heavy bomber equipped to carry only short-range missiles or gravity bombs counts as one warhead. U.S. heavy bombers equipped to carry long-range nuclear air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) each count as 10 warheads, and Soviet heavy bombers equipped to carry long-range nuclear ACLMs each count as eight warheads.

In START II, heavy bombers will be counted using the number of nuclear weapons -- whether long-range nuclear ALCMs, short-range missiles or gravity bombs -- for which they are actually equipped. This number will be specified in the Treaty Memorandum on Attribution and will be confirmed by a one-time exhibition and by routine START on-site inspections.

Another new feature of this Treaty will be the provision that up to 100 heavy bombers that have never been accountable under the START I Treaty as long-range-nuclear-ALCM heavy bombers may be reoriented to a conventional role. Such bombers will not count against the Treaty warhead limits. They will be based separately from heavy bombers equipped for nuclear weapons, will be used only for non-nuclear missions, and will have observable differences from other heavy bombers of the same type that are not reoriented to a conventional role. Such heavy bombers may be returned to a nuclear role after three months notification, but then may not be reoriented again to a conventional role.

VERIFICATION

The comprehensive START I verification regime will continue to apply to the new Treaty. In addition, START II will include some new verification measures, such as observation of SS-18 silo conversion and missile elimination procedures, exhibitions and inspections of all heavy bombers to confirm weapon loads, and exhibitions of heavy bombers reoriented to a conventional role to confirm their observable differences.

(End text)